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ABSTRACT

In view of the level of school transportation services being provided Statewide in California, there is a need for the establishment and enforcement of realistic school board policies to assure the efficient and effective administration and operation of pupil transportation systems. The purpose of this bulletin is to provide guidelines for consideration by local school board members in developing or revising transportation policies related to pupil-passenger conduct and to provide suggestions for implementing such policies. (Author/MLF)

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# Guidelines for the Development and Implementation of School District Governing Board Policies Related to Pupil-Passenger Conduct

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CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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# Guidelines for the Development and Implementation of School District Governing Board Policies Related to Pupil-Passenger Conduct

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# PREFACE

California has experienced a population explosion of unprecendented proportion during the past twenty-five years. Its public school enrollment has paralleled this growth and, in 1971, there were more than 4,900,000 children and adults registered in K-12 public schools and classes. Pupil transportation services have increased accordingly, and there are currently 18,900 licensed school bus drivers operating 12,465 buses approximately 151 million miles annually transporting pupils to and from school and for associated activities.

In view of the level of school transportation services being provided on a statewide basis, there is a need for the establishment and enforcement of realistic school board policies to assure the efficient and effective administration and operation of pupil transportation systems.

During recent years, there have been problems in the field related to the actual authority of the bus driver and pupil-passenger conduct in general. Section 14263 of Title 5, California Administrative Code, has been amended to mandate the adoption of rules and regulations by local boards of trustees regarding pupil-passenger behavior.

The purpose of this bulletin is to provide guidelines for consideration by local school board members in developing or revising transportation policies related to pupil-passenger conduct and to provide suggestions for implementing such policies.

Other transportation bulletins, essentially nontechnical in content, will be written and distributed as operational problems materialize in the field. Suggestions as to bulletin titles and content are welcomed.

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# GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING POLICIES RELATED TO PUPIL-PASSENGER CONDUCT

The content of this bulletin is devoted to offering some philosophical suggestions and to providing content guidelines for the preparation of school board policies in the area of pupil behavior while being transported on school buses. School district personnel are urged to utilize whatever ideas, contained herein, that appear to be applicable to the local situation. The development and revision of school board policies should be a continuing endeavor and should involve all levels of personnel concerned with the policy subject area. Classified employees, teachers, administrators, pupils, parents, other lay citizens, and the transportation supervisor should contribute to such policy development.

The primary function of any school district transportation system is to transport pupils in a safe and timely manner. It therefore becomes incumbent upon the governing board of a school district to establish those policies and procedures which provide the greatest degree of transportation safety. As a generalization, there is probably no aspect of daily school operations which is more reliant upon safety consciousness than the driving of a school bus. Other school employees are charged with the responsibility of pupil supervision in static surroundings, but the bus driver has this same responsibility for supervision, which usually involves larger numbers of pupils than are typically found in the classroom situation, and he exercises this supervision in a mobile environment. He is constantly subjected to distractions originating within and without the school bus he is operating, and the safety factor decreases in direct proportion to increases in these internal and external distractions. The driver is obligated to provide as safe a ride as is humanly possible, and his pupil passengers are obligated to provide a minimum of internal distractions so as to help assure this safe ride. With this objective in mind, it is reasonable that school boards should establish policies to control student conduct so as to enhance the transportation safety factor.

In any situation where a person is placed in a position of authority, particularly for safety reasons, and is responsible for the acceptable conduct of others, the keyword is discipline. This does not mean discipline from the punitive standpoint, but rather discipline as a positive factor leading to voluntary acceptable conduct as pupil-passengers. Self-discipline is the most positive factor and is one result of a sound educational program.

School boards are encouraged to sponsor education and training programs which emphasize the positive aspects of pupil-passenger conduct. Such programs are preventive, by nature, and will tend to reduce any need for punitive action. Some examples of these positive techniques might include the following:

1. Publication and distribution, to all bus riders and their parents, of a brochure indicating the obligations of the district, parents, and pupils regarding transportation services, and specifically covering the following:

a. Behavior at pick-up and disembarkation points
b. Procedures for boarding and seating
c. Authority and responsibilities of the driver
d. Behavior as pupil-passengers
e. Procedures for disembarking
f. Procedures regarding bus excuses, requests for pupils to board or disembark at other than usual stops, etc.
g. Procedures for requesting change in routes and stops
h. Procedures for handling pupil behavior problems
i. Minimum distances within which school district transportation services are not provided

2. Formalized classroom units of study, utilizing visual aids, etc., offered at the entry level for the provision of transportation services; e.g.,at grades K and 1 for K-6 schools, at grade 7 for junior high schools, at grade 10 for senior high schools, etc.

3. Dry runs for pupils prior to entry into grade level where transportation services are provided. This could include picking up K and grade 1 pupils late in the summer and returning them to their home stops following a trip to the school. When transportation is first provided at grade 7, a bus could be assigned to visit all grade 6 classrooms during the previous school year and pupils could be provided experience in embarking, disembarking, seating, etc. Such dry runs should include distribution of informative brochures, discussion by the driver regarding safety practices, emergency procedures, and other pertinent directions and requirements, with emphasis on acceptable pupil conduct.

In the development of rules and regulations for the operation of a school district transportation system, particularly in regard to pupil-passenger conduct, consideration should be given to six major procedures, some of which have been discussed briefly in the previous narrative:

1. Establishment of school board policies providing guidelines for district employees, parents, and pupils regarding all operational aspects of the pupil transportation system

2. Publication of local rules and regulations related to pupil transportation for primary distribution to pupils utilizing local transportation services and to parents of such pupils

3. Development of specific areas of transportation responsibility for individual school and district administrators and transportation department employees

4. Establishment of a definite referral system for violators of pupil-passenger conduct policies

5. Development of a firm follow-up procedure for all conduct referrals

6. Incorporation of pertinent aspects of the previous five concepts into a pocket-sized handbook for bus drivers with periodic evaluation and rewriting of content

With these six major procedures in mind, it may be well to elaborate to some degree on each one. No attempt will be made to provide a stereotyped listing of policies and regulations for blanket adoption by school boards, but rather to offer ideas which may be incorporated into established local formats for such policies, rules, and regulations. Some suggestions may need modification for local use while others may not be at all pertinent for a given school district.

## Establishing Board Policies

1. Establishment of school board policies providing guidelines for district employees, parents, and pupils regarding all operational aspects of the pupil transportation system

The adoption of school board policies related to conduct of pupils on school buses is mandated by the California Administrative Code, Title 5, Section 14263(b) which states, "Boards of trustees shall adopt rules and regulations to enforce this section. These regulations shall include, but not be limited to, specific administrative procedures relating to suspension of riding privileges and shall be made available to parents, pupils, teachers, and other interested parties."

Recognizing the increasing desire for involvement in policy making on the part of school district employees and lay citizens, a school district may wish to adopt a procedure similar to the following in partial fulfillment of Section 14263(b) requirements cited above:

Pupil-Passenger Conduct

a. The superintendent shall appoint a Transportation Procedures Committee for the purpose of determining proper pupil behavior while approaching, waiting for, boarding and disembarking, and riding a school bus.

   (1) The committee shall be charged with determining and publishing specific rules and regulations regarding pupil-passenger conduct, subject to approval by the school district board of trustees.

   (2) The committee shall determine appropriate discipline procedures to insure compliance with necessary rules and regulations. Pupils who persistently defy proper authority may be denied transportation through temporary suspension of riding privileges by building principals, or permanent (semester or longer) suspension by the board of trustees upon recommendation of the district superintendent.

   (3) Pupils denied transportation may request a hearing by the above committee. The decision reached by the committee shall be final and subject to appeal only to the school district board of trustees.

b. Pupils shall receive proper instructions concerning their responsibilities as determined by the above committee.

(1) Building principals shall be responsible to see that written information concerning transportation policies and regulations have been seen by all parents of children being transported.

(2) The transportation supervisor shall be responsible for providing necessary instruction to all pupil passengers, including conduct and procedures during emergency situations.

c. The school bus driver shall have the authority and responsibility necessary to implement established rules and regulations. He shall be recognized as the ultimate authority on his bus and shall be held accountable for the acceptable behavior of pupils in his charge, consistent with approved policies, rules, and regulations.

d. All procedural rules and regulations developed by the transportation procedures committee, the district superintendent, building principals, or the transportation supervisor shall be subject to approval by the board of trustees. Upon approval, their enforcement is the responsibility of the district superintendent or his duly appointed representatives.

The above suggested policy is basic and avoids direct involvement of the local school board beyond the policy-making level. It does delegate authority to a transportation procedures committee, the district superintendent, building principals, the transportation supervisor, and bus drivers for the development of regulations and informational bulletins as well as establishing authority for enforcement. Note that state law and regulations are not quoted as such quotation is not a required part of a school district policy although the policy must not be in violation of existing law and State Board regulations (California Administrative Code, Title 5, Education).

Publishing Rules and Regulations

2. Publication of local rules and regulations related to pupil transportation for primary distribution to pupils utilizing local transportation services and the parents of such pupils

Subsequent to the adoption of a basic policy by the local school board, the transportation procedures committee or similar group, the superintendent, principals transportation supervisor, etc., participate in the development of written materials within their respective areas of transportation operations. These portions of the developed materials which are pertinent to pupil-passengers and their parents should then be assembled in a single concise document and distributed by the most effective means so as to reach all pupil-passengers and their parents. There should be a highlighted paragraph in the publication emphasizing the importance of retaining the document at home for future reference.

It is recommended that the introductory portion of the publication contain a sincere "welcome aboard" message and a short history of local school district transportation services as well as the scope of current operations. The finished pamphlet should touch upon all the items mentioned at the top of page 2 from the standpoint of pupil and parent interests and responsibilities. Do not dwell upon school district organization, problems, operational procedures, and so forth. The pamphlet must be pertinent to parents and pupils.

These guidelines are concerned with the conduct of pupil-passengers while riding a school bus, so only those items contained in the district publication related directly to this subject will be emphasized in any detail:

a. Behavior at pick-up and disembarkation points: Indicate district policy and regulations in relation to avoiding congregating on private property, damaging shrubbery and structures, time of arrival at pick-up point, articles permitted and not permitted on bus, relations with other pupils and adults at pick-up point, and so forth.

b. Procedures for boarding and seating: Explain best method to approach bus, any lineup procedure, use of identification cards, seat assignments, responsibility to remain in seats, and so forth.

c. Authority and responsibilities of the driver: Include brief quotations from law (Education Code) and State Board regulations (Title 5) as well as local board policy.

d. Behavior as pupil-passengers: This section should contain positive statements in regard to expected pupil behavior, such as courtesy to fellow passengers and the driver, attire, opportunity for study, or listening to the radio, if available, as part of bus equipment, etc. In addition, it is common practice to provide a listing of violations which are subject to penalty. This listing may be extracted from the publication and duplicated on a single page to provide copies to pupils and parents on more than one occasion during the school year. A typical listing of this type has been prepared by the Elk Grove Unified School District, and it has been included in the appendix to this publication (see Appendix A).

e. Procedures for disembarking: Emphasize importance of remaining in seats until bus stops motion and door is opened and/or driver verbally grants permission to disembark. Check seat area for litter. Leave bus in clean condition. Report any apparent bus damage, markings, cut seats, etc., to driver when disembarking. Identify procedures for escorting children across streets and highways.

f. Procedures regarding bus excuses, requests for pupils to board or disembark at other than usual stops, etc.: Explain district requirements and procedures to obtain permission to vary from the normal school to home and home to school bus routine.

g. Procedures for requesting change in routes and stops: One of the major dilemmas facing a school district planning to curtail or change bus routes or stops is the inevitable unfavorable reaction on the part of a number of parents. This reaction always has the potential to affect the attitude and behavior of pupil-passengers. It is important, therefore, to explain that transportation services are subject to change due to economies, fluctuating population centers, etc. It is also important to provide a simple and direct way for parents to communicate with the school district and request changes in stops and routes. This communication should be in writing and directed to a specific name and address contained in the publication. All such correspondence should be acknowledged in writing within two working days, indicating action taken on the request or specifying that a reply will be forwarded upon completion of any necessary study. The same channel should be available to parents to register complaints or suggestions.

h. Procedures for handling pupil behavior problems: This should not be a long dissertation on pupil behavior. There should be a clear statement as to the value of orderly busing procedures, the necessity for a lack of distractions to assure a safe ride, and the need for cooperation with regulations and driver directions. The parent should be informed that a written communication will be forwarded on the occasion of any pupil misbehavior and that the parent will be asked to participate in conferences or other procedures to eliminate future misbehavior problems. Encourage continuing good behavior to enhance the safety factor, and indicate that temporary or permanent suspension of riding privileges could result from flagrant violation of rules. Explanation of any existing district step-by-step procedures in handling discipline problems and the inclusion of sample forms is optional with the district.

i. Minimum distances within which school district transportation services are not provided: To avoid future controversy in this matter, it is desirable to define the boundaries within which transportation is not provided. Explain any exceptions for special education, certain grade levels, or hazardous conditions. Do not simply state that transportation is not provided within one mile, but rather indicate the boundaries or landmarks. The best procedure is to reproduce a scaled map for each school concerned with superimposed lines to indicate boundaries.

## Developing Areas of Responsibility

3. Development of specific areas of transportation responsibility for individual school and district administrators and transportation department employees

A firm line of responsibility and channel for communications should be established in order to assure complete intra-staff understanding and an orderly process for the daily operation of the transportation system. In essence, this constitutes the preparation of job descriptions, and these should be in written form. All areas of transportation operations should be listed, but this publication is concerned primarily with pupil-passenger conduct so the following examples relate only to that aspect:

Governing Board -- Adoption of policies related to transportation operations. Approval of regulations, handbooks, violations provisions, etc., regarding transportation services and procedures. Review and approval of extended suspensions of riding privileges upon recommendation of superintendent or request of parents following action of Transportation Procedures Committee.

Superintendent -- General supervision of transportation program. Administrative approval of regulations, handbooks, etc., and referral to governing board. Review and approval of suspension of bus riding privileges exceeding five days or upon parental request.

Review and referral of extended suspensions for governing board action.

Building Principals-- Assume administrative responsibilities for transportation services as directed by superintendent.

Prepare or approve handbooks, regulations, communications to parents and pupils, etc., related to pupil-passenger conduct and transportation operations.

Supervise transportation employees as directed by the superintendent.

Review and take appropriate action on all misbehavior referrals related to transportation operations. Suspend bus riding privileges up to and including five school days when appropriate.

Notify transportation department employees of actions taken regarding misbehavior referrals.

Coadministrators -- (In those instances when such positions as vice-principal, dean of boys or girls, etc., exist; specific areas of responsibility and lines of communication to principal and transportation employees should be indicated.)

Transportation Supervisor -- Assumes responsibilities as directed by superintendent and/or building principal

Provides and supervises approved training program for bus drivers and other transportation employees

Develops approved instructional program for pupil-passengers and supervises or participates in presentation

Cooperates with classroom teachers in development and presentation of instructional units on transportation operation and safety

Process pupil misbehavior reports received from drivers and takes action as directed by superintendent and/or building principal

Communicates with parents and pupils as directed by superintendent and/or building principal

Maintains records as directed to assure timely and complete action on misbehavior referrals

Bus Driver -- Assumes direct responsibility for pupil-passenger conduct as directed by transportation supervisor

Takes action on minor pupil-passenger behavior violations as authorized by transportation supervisor

Refers misbehavior reports in accordance with procedures established by transportation supervisor

Maintains records as directed to assure receipt of notice as to administrative action taken on misbehavior referrals and enforces indicated decisions

The above information should not be contained in any communications directed to parents or pupils but should be an integral part of employee handbooks or other materials prepared as a part of district policy.

## Establishing Referral System

4. Establishment of a definite referral system for violators of pupil-passenger conduct policies

There is probably no single aspect of pupil transportation operations which is the cause of more frustration or controversy than the matter of misbehavior referrals and subsequent disciplinary action. The existence of any feeling that administrators are not "backing up" the bus drivers, or that the bus drivers are not exercising proper supervision, eventually leads to a breakdown in employee morale and loss of efficiency in the transportation operation.

Bus drivers must be made completely aware as to district policy in regard to disciplinary actions they are permitted to take without reference to higher authority. This may take the form of verbal admonitions or warnings on two occasions for minor infractions or some other logical number of such warnings. In this respect a simple check on a roster of pupil-passengers provided to the driver may help in keeping track of the number of such warnings. An alternative procedure might be completion of a simple form notifying the transportation supervisor that such warning had been given. In this latter instance, the transportation supervisor could check on alphabetical roster of pupil-passengers riding all buses.

The time eventually arrives when a more formal treatment of misbehavior problems is required. Regardless of what system is utilized, there are some basic points which must be incorporated into the procedure:

a. Documentation and recordkeeping is important, even though it poses a clerical and administrative obligation. Such documentation provides "evidence" and avoids "hearsay" in case of future parental complaints.

b. The bus driver must <u>never</u> commit himself to the pupil-passenger as to what administrative disciplinary action will be taken. When this occurs, the bus driver puts himself in an untenable position if the promised action does not materialize.

c. The bus driver should never exceed the authority which is provided him by administrative or school board action. His driving and supervision responsibilities are requiring enough, and disciplinary actions should be limited to warnings and emergency control measures necessitating on-the-spot action due to severe and unusual misbehavior situations. Pupil control is basically a responsibility and function of administration.

d. Disciplinary action only has long-range effect if the administrator, parent, and pupil are mutually involved in an understanding of the problem, acceptance of the disciplinary action, and knowledge of consequences if misbehavior continues. Consultations, written correspondence, telephone calls, or other means can be used to effect this understanding consistent with local policy.

e. An approved form should be used to record violations of conduct rules and the corrective action taken. Preferably, this should be a multicopy form so that copies are available for the parent, transportation supervisor, administrator in charge of disciplinary actions, and for return from the administrator to the transportation supervisor indicating corrective action taken.

The value of having the bus driver complete a referral form while in the process of operating a school bus is debatable. On home to school runs, it may be advisable for the bus driver to give the pupil a prepared card needing only the entry of the pupil's name. This card could direct the pupil to report immediately to the principal's office due to misbehavior

on the bus. Upon completion of the run, the driver or transportation supervisor could phone the principal's office to provide background information on the incident. This must be followed up by completion of a referral form by the driver. On school to home runs, field trips, etc.; the driver could use the same card with other items checked or a different card directed to the parent and stating that the parent should call the administrator or await a call from the administrator for further information. Again, the driver would complete the referral form at the conclusion of his run. This procedure tends to avoid driver-pupil confrontations and lends itself to completion of the referral form when the driver can devote more thought to it. The referral form should be developed to reflect the needs and planned operational procedures which are peculiar to the district concerned. Examples of typical forms appear in the appendix (see appendixes B, C, and D).

## Developing a Follow-up Procedure

5. Development of a firm follow-up procedure for all conduct referrals

In reality this subject is a part of the preceding discussion (Item 4), but due to its importance is treated separately. There must be a firm and completely understood working relationship between administration and the transportation department, and more specifically between the administrator handling disciplinary matters and the bus driver. When the driver completes and forwards a referral form, he is entitled to receive written notification as to action taken by the administration within a reasonable period of time. This can be accomplished by use of the multicopy referral form itself, and there should be no undue delay in completing administrative action and notifying the transportation supervisor and driver. The parent should be asked to sign and return a copy of the administrative action notification. This can be accomplished by mail or through the pupil (hip-pocket method). There will be those occasions when the administrative decision is disappointing to the transportation supervisor and/or the bus driver. This disappointment should never be revealed in the presence of pupils but certainly should be the basis for consultation with the administrator by the transportation supervisor and possibly the driver.

It is <u>not</u> recommended that a list of violations be distributed with automatic punishments such as the following:

Talking back to driver -- 3-school day bus suspension

Spitting on bus floor -- 5-school day bus suspension

There is no harm in listing typical violations, but provide some leeway for judgment decisions in regard to punishment, such as the following:

Talking back to driver - Minimum of one school day suspension of bus riding privilege with consideration of the nature and severity of offense

Spitting on bus floor - Minimum of two school days suspension of bus riding privileges with increase of suspension period if violation has been repeated

It is recommended that a listing of unacceptable behavior actions be available for parental consultations or any other good purpose. The listing should indicate that the items are only examples and are not all-inclusive. There should also be a statement that disciplinary action is taken after consideration is given to the nature and severity of the offense and to the continued safety of the bus operation.

Rather than listing minimum punishments for stated violations, consideration should be given to progressive disciplinary action for violation of any regulation after the warning period:

First offense after warning -- minimum of one school day suspension

Second offense after warning -- minimum of three school days suspension

Third offense after warning -- minimum of five school days suspension

Fourth offense or suspensions exceeding five days -- referral to superintendent

It is strongly recommended that all suspensions be in terms of days that school is in session, such as "six school days." This avoids misunderstandings in regard to Saturdays, Sundays, holidays, and vacation periods. Suspensions for one week or "until the end of the semester" can be misconstrued. Suspension notices should also contain the date of the first day of suspension and the date of the last day of suspension.

The listing of violations and statements regarding probable punishments is an administrative attempt to provide fairness and equity in matching punishment to violation. It helps to avoid ambivalency in decision making and provides equal punishment for equal violations, particularly when more than one administrative person is handling such matters, e.g., the dean of girls and the dean of boys.

Two other methods for effecting pupil-passenger control are the merit system and the demerit system. The basic concept of both systems is the same; only the application is different. Under the merit system, each pupil-passenger starts the year or semester with 100 merits. For any violation the bus driver turns in a card indicating the violation and the number of merits (usually one or two) that the pupil should lose(with administrative approval). When the pupil's merit record falls to 95 (or 90, 85, or some other number), then administrative disciplinary action takes place. The following guidelines could be established for such disciplinary action:

| Merit Standing | Action |
|---|---|
| 95 | Letter to parent and consultation |
| 90 | Minimum of one school day bus suspension |
| 85 | Minimum of three school days bus suspension |
| 80 | Minimum of five school days bus suspension |
| 75 | Referral to superintendent |

The demerit system operates in the same manner but from the opposite starting point. Each pupil-passenger commences the year or semester with "0" demerits. As violations occur, the bus driver recommends one or two demerits. When the pupil's demerit standing reaches 5, 10, 15. 20, 25, etc., disciplinary actions are taken in the same manner as for the merit system.

One of the advantages of either the merit or demerit system is that it eliminates the warning period as the initial loss of merits or awarding of demerits constitutes a warning. Consideration might be given to an award system for pupils who complete the year without losing merits or having been awarded demerits. This may have greater pupil acceptance at the elementary level than in secondary schools, but an incentive program of some sort could be applicable to any level.

One of the potential dangers in either the merit or demerit system is the indiscriminate submittal of "merits lost" or "demerits awarded" slips by school bus drivers. The simplicity of either system lends itself to becoming a crutch for the driver who consistently has pupil-control difficulties. It is <u>not</u> recommended that either system be employed unless this potential danger is emphasized when orienting district employees to the system.

## Preparing Handbook for Drivers

6. Incorporation of pertinent aspects of the previous five concepts into a pocket-sized handbook for drivers, with periodic evaluation and rewriting of content

This publication could be titled <u>Transportation Employee Handbook</u> or any similar title. It should contain formal school board policies and subsequent regulations, directives, and information regarding the operation of the transportation system. Aside from pupil-passenger conduct and control, it should contain material regarding classified personnel management; transportation provisions for field trips, rooter buses, and athletic teams; driver conduct; emergency procedures; bus inspections; required reports with sample forms; driver license renewal procedures; etc. In the area of pupil-passenger conduct, it should contain all the materials mentioned in the preceding concepts and should be in the possession of the driver or kept in a designated place on each bus.

This is the document that should be reviewed and revised by the Transportation Procedures Committee on an annual or more frequent basis. If pocket-size is not practicable from an economy or storage standpoint, it should be duplicated and bound in such a manner that revision of portions of the document is feasible.

## Being Friendly, Firm, and Fair

There are no written rules and regulations which will substitute for an excellent working relationship between bus driver and pupil-passenger. There are classroom teachers who possess the type of personality, and who have established such rapport with pupils, that they operate effectively

and with a minimum of discipline problems regardless of any formal policies, rules, or regulations which are established as district requirements. The same may be said of a great many California school bus drivers. There are always those situations, however, which require the impartial application of "rules" in order to assure the common good. This is the basis for adoption of school board policies and the establishment of operating rules and regulations. The bus driver who has developed a studied functional philosophy based upon "Be Friendly, Be Firm, Be Fair" will find less need for pupil-passenger rules of conduct than his compatriot who has not devoted careful thought to his operating relationship with his passengers.

Be Friendly: The bus driver is the captain of his ship. He takes pride in the appearance and operating condition of his bus and makes his passengers feel welcome aboard. He does not seek popularity with his passengers, but he does seek respect and an amiable relationship. He is not Joe or Susie, but rather Mr. Smith or Mrs. Jones to all passengers. A small sign at the bus entrance which reads, "Welcome aboard; your driver is Mr. Smith," helps to break the ice. The driver has a cheery, "Good Morning" for each boarding pupil and a, "Good Afternoon" for disembarking pupils at home stops. "Hi," "Howdy," or "How ya doin?" are poor substitutes for "Good Morning," although they may be employed after firm rapport has been established between driver and passengers. The bus driver is friendly, but he is not overly familiar with his passengers nor does he encourage his passengers to be overly familiar with him. If he uses sarcasm in his conversations with pupils, he is not in a position to condemn them for using sarcasm in their remarks to him.

Friendliness is the keyword in establishing good relationships with fellow staff members as well as with pupils. Courteous procedures, such as indicated by the form used by the Fullerton Elementary School District (Appendix E), are helpful in developing understanding and appreciation of the bus driver's job.

Be Firm: Firmness implies decision making, and decision making should never be based upon emotion, particularly angry emotion. Never threaten, bluster, shout, or show your exasperation. The driver must be certain that his passengers understand the rules of the game. These should be explained in a friendly and firm manner using the positive approach. It is better to indicate that passengers are to remain in their seats rather than stating that they are not to move from their seats. Once the rules are understood, the driver must see that they are enforced. If they are overlooked on the first serious offense, it is easy to ignore them on the second offense, and virtually impossible to reinstate them on the third offense. The result could be chaos and an open invitation to challenge the authority of the bus driver. Firmness does not mean inflexible rigidity. There is nothing wrong with "one more chance," but "one more chance" does not mean "two more chances." Firmness will not result in loss of friendliness, but ambivalency and indecision certainly will.

Be fair: In a sense, fairness means equal treatment. The bus driver can be friendly without playing favorites. He can be firm without picking on certain pupils. He can be consistent in recommending similar disciplinary actions for similar violations.

## Summary

The bus driver should develop a carefully conceived philosophy in regard to his working relationship with his pupil-passengers based upon the principles of friendliness, firmness, and fairness. The school district governing board adopts a basic policy and guidelines to provide controls for the entire transportation operation, including pupil-passenger conduct. A committee appointed by the trustees, district and school administrators, and the transportation supervisor prepare rules and regulations which, when approved by the board of trustees, help to implement the previously adopted policies. With these factors accomplished, and with clear channels of communications leading to understanding by all concerned, the school district is in a favorable position to avoid transportation conflicts rising from pupil misbehavior.

Appendix A

ELK GROVE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
A GUIDE TO STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES
WHILE RIDING SCHOOL BUSES

Dear Parent or Guardian:

The Elk Grove Unified School District Governing Board has adopted rules and regulations to assist students in understanding their responsibilities while riding buses of the school district. These rules will assure safe and proper travel to and from school and are to be observed while riding the bus and waiting at school bus stops. The following list of student actions constitute violations of the established rules and regulations:

1. Abusive body contact, (slapping, hitting, poking, shoving, pulling hair, etc.) in or when loading or unloading bus
2. Fighting on the bus or at the bus stop
3. Using other than the student's regularly designated bus stop
4. Using profane language or obscene gestures
5. Unauthorized exits (from emergency doors, and windows).
6. Putting any part of body out of bus window at any time
7. Any movement OUT of seats while bus is in motion
8. Riding bus after receiving no ride penalty
9. Legs, feet, and objects obstructing aisle or facing to the rear in seats
10. Creating excessive noise
11. Any improper bus stop procedures (not lining up, rock throwing, playing in streets, any property damage at bus stops, etc.)
12. Unauthorized opening, closing, or tampering of any kind with bus doors, windows, or emergency exits
13. Any type of damage or defacing of bus
14. Lighting of matches, cigarettes, smoking on bus
15. Throwing any objects in, out of, or at the bus
16. Littering of any kind
17. Transporting live animals, reptiles, or insects on a school bus
18. Eating or drinking on the bus
19. Disrespect to the bus driver
20. Give improper identification when requested by driver
21. Tampering with radio or bus controls

22. Failure to obey driver

23. Failure to remain quiet at all railroad crossings

24. Endangering life or limb of other people

25. Other unauthorized or unsafe actions

Authority of bus driver (Section 14263, California Administrative Code, Title 5) states:

(a) Pupils transported in a school bus shall be under the authority of, and responsible directly to, the driver of the bus, and the driver shall be held responsible for the orderly conduct of the pupils while they are on the bus or being escorted across a street, highway, or road. Continued disorderly conduct or persistent refusal to submit to the authority of the driver shall be sufficient reason for a pupil to be denied transportation. A bus driver shall not require any pupil to leave the bus enroute between home and school or other destinations.

(b) Boards of trustees shall adopt rules and regulations to enforce this section. These regulations shall include, but not be limited to, specific administrative procedures relating to suspension of riding privileges and shall be made available to parents, pupils, teachers, and other interested parties.

Penalties for infractions of established rules are listed below:

1st citation -- Warning or possible bus riding suspension

2nd citation -- 3-day bus riding suspension

3rd citation -- 2-weeks bus riding suspension

4th citation -- Balance-of-year bus riding suspension

Immediate suspension for threatened or actual bodily harm

The Elk Grove Unified School District wishes to thank the parents or guardians for their cooperation.

Appendix B

ELK GROVE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
NOTICE OF UNSATISFACTORY CONDUCT ON SCHOOL BUS

In order to assure safe transportation of pupils, bus rules and regulations have been developed to define appropriate standards to be met. Our school district's policy provides that any student who is disorderly in conduct or defies the authority of the bus driver may be denied transportation.

This is notice that the conduct of _____ on bus # _____

on the following date _____ a.m./p.m. has been unsatisfactory for the following reason(s):

Rule Violation No. _____

Citation No. _____

_____

_____

_____

_____
Signature of Driver

---

1st Citation -- Warning or possible bus riding suspension
2nd Citation -- 3-day bus riding suspension
3rd Citation -- 2-weeks bus riding suspension
4th Citation -- Balance of the year bus riding suspension

_____
Student's Name

Citation No. _____

Rule Violation No. _____

Action taken: _____

_____ _____
Name of School Date Principal/Vice Principal Signature

Parents or guardians are requested to sign below indicating their awareness of their child's unsatisfactory conduct. Please sign and return bottom portion to school the next day.

_____ _____
Date Parent/Guardian Signature

Appendix C

FULLERTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
NOTICE OF UNSATISFACTORY CONDUCT ON SCHOOL BUS

School: _____ Date: _____ 19__; _____ a.m. p.m.

*Section 14263, State Board of Education Regulations Governing Pupil Transportation states: "Pupils transported in a school bus shall be under the authority of and responsible directly to the driver of the bus. Continued disorderly conduct, or persistent refusal to submit to the authority of the driver shall be sufficient reason for refusing transportation to any pupil and for such other punishment as the law may provide. The driver of any school bus shall be held responsible for the orderly conduct of the pupils transported."*

**This is notice that the conduct of _____ on Bus No._____ has been unsatisfactory for the following reasons:**

_____Loud talking; ____Insubordination; _____Profanity or vulgarity;

_____Fighting; _____Must be constantly corrected;

_____Not remaining seated while bus is in motion;

_____Arms or body exposed outside window; _____Other: _____

_____
Driver's Signature

**ACTION TAKEN:** _____

_____

**REMARKS:** _____

_____

_____ _____
Principal/Vice Principal Date

I have read the above notice _____
Signature Parent or Guardian

**THIS NOTICE MUST BE SIGNED BY PARENT OR GUARDIAN AND RETURNED TO THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL/VICE PRINCIPAL.**

Distribution:

1-Parent-white copy; 2-School-pink copy; 3-Transportation-canary copy
4 - Driver - blue copy

Appendix D

CHICO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
NOTICE OF UNSATISFACTORY CONDUCT ON SCHOOL BUS

School _____ Date _____

**Section 14263 of the State Board of Education** on regulations governing pupil transportation **states:**

*"Authority of Driver. Pupils transported in a school bus shall be under the authority of and responsible directly to the driver of the bus. Continued disorderly conduct or persistent refusal to submit to the authority of the driver shall be sufficient reason for a pupil to be denied transportation in accordance with regulations of the governing board of the district. The driver of any school bus shall be held responsible for the orderly conduct of the pupils transported. No bus driver shall require any pupil to leave the bus before such pupil has reached his destination."*

**This is notice that the conduct of** _____ **on Bus No.** _____ ,

**Route No.** _____, **has been unsatisfactory for the following reasons:**

_____**Boisterous** _____**Insubordination** _____**Profanity or vulgarity**

_____**Not remaining seated while bus in motion** _____**Eating on bus**

_____**Must be constantly corrected** _____**Arms or body exposed outside window**

_____**Other infraction**

**Action taken:** _____**Warning**

_____**Transportation suspended for** _____**days beginning** _____

_____**Transportation suspended pending conference between parents and school authorities**

**Remarks:** _____

_____

**(This notice must be returned to the bus driver, signed by parent or guardian before pupil may resume riding on bus.)**

_____
**School Bus Driver**

**I have read the above notice** _____
**Parent or Guardian**

**PARENT OR GUARDIAN COPY**

Appendix E

FULLERTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT
MEMO TO TEACHERS ACCOMPANYING PUPILS ON FIELD TRIPS

**WELCOME ABOARD!**

**I am _____, your bus driver for this trip. I would like you to assume the authority of the behavior of your pupils aboard my bus.**

*The state law invests in me the complete authority and responsibility of the pupils; however, I can do a safer job of driving and arrive at our destination in a shorter period of time if you, the teacher, will assume the responsibility of pupil conduct, the same as you demand in your classroom.*

**Should I encounter any problems on this trip, I would like to work through you instead of the children.**

**Thank you.**

**A reminder:**

**District transportation scheduling requires that this bus arrive back at school at _____, therefore, in considering travel time, it will be necessary that your class be loaded and ready to return at _____.**



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